



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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PERMIT MORATORIUM EXTENDED FOR THE MACKEREL FISHERIES OF THE GULF OF MEXICO AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

NOAA Fisheries has published a final rule, effective October 2, 2000, to implement the regulations in Amendment 12 to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP). Amendment 12 extends the expiration date of the commercial king mackerel vessel permit moratorium from its current expiration date of October 15, 2000, to October 15, 2005, or until the moratorium can be replaced with a license limitation, limited access, and/or individual fishing quota or individual transferrable quota system, whichever occurs earlier.

The commercial king mackerel fisheries of both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, valued at approximately \$7 million, are subject to annual

closures when quotas are reached. Such closures in these fisheries indicate that fleet size and fishery effort are still excessive to harvest the allowable quotas. The Councils are concerned that an expiration of the moratorium would result in an increased number of participants in the king mackerel fishery, exacerbating the early closures. The intended effect of this rule is to prevent increases in effort, to possibly reduce the number of permittees in the king mackerel fishery, and to stabilize the economic performance of the current participants, while protecting king mackerel stocks from overfishing.

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